

Universal Suffrage

Does the experience of this Republic up to the close of the nineteenth century justify universal manhood suffrage, or should the elective franchise be limited by educational, property, or other qualification?

ADDRESS OF
WM. A.^{leander} MACCORKLE,
" Late Governor of West Virginia,
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"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

GIFT
MRS. WOODROW WILSON
NOV. 26, 1919

ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: De Tocqueville, the aristocratic delineator of American Democracy, narrates that in his travels into the primeval America he arrived upon the shores of a crystal lake, embosomed in untouched forests; that in the midst of the lake was a beautiful islet, shaded to the banks with trees old as the daylight of time. He crossed over to the island and was delighted with the richness of the soil and the exuberance of growth of tree and flower, and was awed by the silence and beauty and solitude of the scene. However, amidst the majesty of this morning of nature, he found upon the island some remains of man. Upon careful inspection he discovered, amidst the glory of nature, where a European had made his home. But how changed! The logs of the cabin had fallen to the ground and had sprouted anew, and over their remains had grown the flower and the tree. The scattered stones of the hearth lay under the fallen chimney and were blackened with the old fire, and were overscattered with the thin ashes of another day. He stood in silent admiration of the glories of nature and the littleness of man, and as he left the solitude he exclaimed with melancholy, "Are the ruins, then, already here?"

So, Mr. President, when I received from your able and courteous secretary the formulation of the question for discussion, which betokens within itself

that, whilst we are in the very glory of the dawn of our day, the sacred temple of our hopes and love was broken, I was led to exclaim with the old philosopher, "Are the ruins, then, already here?"

In my poor way, I will this evening examine the sacred edifice, and we will together touch its walls and attempt to ascertain whether foundation and lintel and jam and turret stand true and plumb as when they left the hands of the master builders; for, as Mr. Lowell relates, when Guizot once asked "How long I thought the Republic would last?" "I replied," said he, "so long as the ideas of the men who founded it continue dominant." Do we not all assent to his reply?

The formulation of the subject for investigation, "Does the experience of this Republic up to the close of the nineteenth century justify universal manhood suffrage, or should the elective franchise be limited by educational, property, or other qualification," carries in it the most important and vital questions of our civil life.

The question is of to-day, and I will not take precious time to present the rubbish of the history of the franchise. A word, however, is necessary that we may intelligently grasp the conditions of the early days of the Republic and understand their influence upon the present. Being a Virginian, I will be excused by the indulgent audience for having taken Virginia as a general type showing the evolution of the present franchise condition.

The status in Virginia explains why the Fathers, when they annunciated the great salient principles of free government, a radical departure in the lines of government, did not also announce manhood suffrage, the present essence of democracy.

Necessarily, when the great truths of representative government were proclaimed by the Fathers, they could not at once disembarass themselves from all of the accompaniments of government as theretofore experienced by them. It is generally understood that the limitation of suffrage to freeholders, which practically made an aristocratic government, and the equal representation of the counties, which was sectional, were voluntarily adopted by the people of Virginia. Such was not the case. This limitation of suffrage to freeholders was the result of the commands of the King of England, and these commands were enforced by the bayonets of two regiments of his soldiers, and it was without any act of assembly. Thus, at the time of the Revolution, for more than a century freehold government had been the practical law of the people. Yet it was contrary to the salient principles of the peoples' free government. The question then naturally arises, why was this system continued after the people had substituted their own in place of the rule of the King of England? This is frequently asked by those who look toward the reimpsonition of suffrage limitation.

In Virginia when the convention of 1776 met and adopted its Declaration of Rights :

That all men are by nature, equal, free and independent ;

That all power is vested in, and consequently derived from, the people ;

That government is and ought to be instituted for the common benefit, protection and security of the people ; and

That a majority of the people hath an indubitable, inalienable and indefeasible right to act for the public weal ;

there was then in the condition of affairs a practical necessity for the continuation of the anomaly of free-hold suffrage. The convention, composed of some of the greatest and wisest of the Fathers of the Republic, was sitting within sight of the bayonets of the King of Great Britain, and within sound of his cannon. They had inaugurated the war in which every right of life and property was imperiled. The free-holders were a great and powerful body upon whom was the chief reliance for defense against the tyranny of England, and hence they adopted the proposition that the right of suffrage "shall remain as at present exercised." There was no time to change and pull down and build up. It was the time to fight. The Fathers thoroughly understood the controvention of the principles announced by them and as set out by their theory of government. Mr. Jefferson earnestly insisted that the people, "So soon as leisure should be afforded them for entrenching within good form the rights for which they had bled," should do so. This demand for equal exercise of suffrage never afterwards was at rest. Alike in the North as in Virginia the demand was unceasing on the part of the plain people that they should have a part in the management as they had in the perils of the government. This culminated in Virginia in the memorial of 1829 presented to the convention by John Marshall, in which the following pregnant words occur :

"If we are sincerely republican, we must give our confidence to the principles we profess. We have been taught by our fathers that all power is vested in, and derived from, the people; not the freeholders; that the majority of the community, in whom abides the physical force, have also the political right of creating and remoulding at will, their civil institutions. Nor

can this right be anywhere more safely deposited. The generality of mankind, doubtless, desire to become owners of property ; left free to reap the fruits of their labors, they will seek to acquire it honestly. It can never be their interest to overburden, or render precarious, what they themselves desire to enjoy in peace. But should they ever prove as base as the argument supposes, force alone ; arms, not votes, could effect their designs ; and when that shall be attempted, what virtue is there in Constitutional restrictions, in mere wax and paper, to withstand it? To deny to the great body of the people all share in the government ; on suspicion that they may deprive others of their property, to rob them in advance of their rights ; to look to a privileged order as the fountain and depositary of all power ; is to depart from the fundamental maxims, to destroy the chief beauty, the characteristic feature, indeed, of Republican Government.”

In 1849, these words became true in Virginia as well in practice as in theory.

And generally throughout the Republic at this period there rested the strife between the mighty spirits of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson, the one living in latter days in the stately steppings of Daniel Webster, and the other, passing strange for a Virginian to say, reincarnated in the tall form and furrowed brow and catholic spirit of Abraham Lincoln.

What has been the effect of universal suffrage upon the great living principles of our government? Whither has been the trend, upward or downward? Has it strengthened or pauperized the fundamental principles which we have been taught were the abiding glory of free government? How has it affected the relation of the citizen to the local government, to the town, to the city, to the State and the Union ; the re-

lation between the State and the National Government ; and the relation between the classes composing this free government ? These questions, while allowing no touch of poetry or opportunity for the play of fancy, are vital, and their general principles alone can be here considered.

How has universal suffrage affected the principle of local self-government, for as one of the great living heads of my profession, Judge Dillon, well says, “and local self-government, it cannot be too often enforced, is the true and only solid basis of our free institutions?”

This is the first relation of the citizen to government, and it is the fundamental idea of our governmental life because it affects the immediate daily life of the citizen. This primary exercise of the rights of citizenship is so important that I will be pardoned for a little elementary discussion, for a free people should never become tired of contemplating the first steps of free institutions.

The borough-mote in Old England preserved and cultured the vital spark of Teutonic liberty. The borough bell was the living resonant signal as far as its piercing clang could reach, warning fierce baron and greedy churchman and grasping king that the Englishman held to his local rights, even if these rights required his blood.

This is the principle which has distinguished Old England from the other nations of the world, her resolute clinging to the primal principles of her government. In the borough alone was the right of free speech in open meeting. Here alone in all of the Kingdom was the right of self-government, and above all, here was the right of trial by one’s peers. “Had Kebel been a dweller within the borough,” said the Burgesses, “he would have gotten his acquittal as our

liberty is." Under Angevin and Saxon the local power of self-government was resolutely defended. Sometimes it was paid for in money, more often in blood; but at whatever price, it was gotten, despite conflict, bloody though it may have been, or price however high. Then as now the borough was the school-house of liberty. Here were discussed, and often-times fiercely discussed, the first beginnings and principles of free government; for the settlement of these principles affected the immediate welfare of the community, and frequently the personal liberty of its inhabitants. "Let the City of London have all its old liberties and its free customs as well by land as water, besides this I will and grant, that all other cities, boroughs and towns and ports have all of their liberties and free customs," rang the clarion note of the Great Charter. "They have given me four and twenty over kings," exclaimed John Lackland, as he gnashed his teeth in his anguish, but as usual he was mistaken in the people, for instead of twenty-four over kings, he had placed for all time the written guarantees of local government, the very germ of liberty, in the hands of all of his people,

More than five hundred years afterwards, in a new country, the American Revolution broke out, says De Tocqueville, and the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people grew out of the township and took possession of the state.

For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, suspending our own Legislatures, ran the indignant protest of the Declaration of Independence.

Here, then, for the first time, voluntarily, in the history of government, was there incorporated in the initiative life of a State, the full, free and un-

qualified consent of the law-making power to the principle of local self-government. We have changed the borough and the town to the magisterial and school district, the town, the village and the city, but have only transferred to our citizens the doctrine as well as the traditions of the grandest figure in the history of free government, the English borough-man. Sir, it seems to me that if I could make the stricken marble glow with living life, it would not speak in the image of stern Puritan or belted Virginian Cavalier, as typical of our political being, great though their lessons have been; but rather would I create as the chiefest figure of our civil life the English borough-man, holding in his strong and resolute hands, against all comers, the right of free speech, of free local government and the right of trial by jury.

How, then, under the exercise of universal suffrage do we stand to-day in the evolution of local political government? The insistent demand of the citizen, following the English tradition, is for the free control of local matters by the governing power. In these local matters, concerning the local interests of township, district or county, as the years roll on, the demand is becoming more potent within their respective limitations that the local government must be uninterfered with and uncontrolled. Local self-government was never so potent in the history of civil government as it is to-day. In education, police and fiscal affairs its principles have manifestly broadened and strengthened since the advent of universal suffrage. In every state, we see the citizen strengthening his local government by careful legislative enactment controlling the management of his local business. Universal suffrage has peculiarly intensified the desire for, and benefit of, local self-government, for the ob-

vious reason that the local government deals not with the few great questions, but rather with the every-day small affairs of life in which the every-day small people, unlearned and learned, whether owning property or not, are directly interested. This growth of the desire for local self-government is well illustrated by the increasing legislation in all of the states, providing for the election of district and township officers rather than their appointment by a central body such as the County Court. This principle has vindicated the great and persistent contention of our English ancestry by its history in our Union, for local self-government, under universal suffrage, has increased its efficiency in promoting public good by decreasing taxation, increasing the educational facilities and taking direct charge of and improving the police and fiscal affairs. Here do we behold the action of the people directly upon public affairs, untrammeled by political thought and uninterfered with by the demand of party loyalty. Then, Sir, we believe that in this important feature we see one of the peculiar triumphs of our present franchise system, for in every state, on the prairie and in the mountain, in agricultural as well as in commercial and manufacturing communities, we behold the extending, by careful enactment under universal suffrage, of the local self-governing institutions, which called from Thomas Jefferson the expression, "Those wards, called townships in England, are the vital principles of their governments, and have proved themselves the wisest invention ever devised by the wit of man for the perfect exercise of self-government and for the preservation of liberty."

Let us briefly consider the citizen in his relation to a larger and wider sweep of local self-government than that of the borough, county or town. The Amer-

ican city has given to universal suffrage its severest trial. Here has certainly been presented the hardest conditions attending any exercise of universal suffrage. Let us for a moment discuss the conditions presented to the franchise by the American city. They are unique in the whole history of civil government. In the first place, those who exercise the franchise in most great cities are largely foreign, either by birth or immediate lineage. They have had no experience whatever in the art of government, and in most instances they belonged to the governed class. The American city is growing wondrously in wealth, size and power, and its streets, parks, schools, hospitals and all public institutions and their administration are not the results of centuries of civic evolution, as is the case in Europe. They are urgently demanded, at once, and on a colossal scale, and must be administered with no guiding precedent. They are created practically out of the ground. They can not, as in Europe, be added to here, or patched there, and the fault of this century corrected in the next. Their evolution from town to city can not run along with the evolution of the people from barbarism to civilization, and thus have relations which gradually adjust themselves to abiding and final conditions. They must spring into life full panoplied for the needs of a vastly growing and exacting population.

“It is not strange that the people educating and experimenting on city government, for which there is absolutely no precedent, under conditions of exceptional difficulty, should have to stumble toward correct and successful methods through experience, which may be both costly and distressing,” says a great authority. Thus the city has a burden of educating the governing population whose idea of government is

entirely low, and, concurrently, the city must take care of its material growth and carry on all of the practical details of government. This growth in its haste has produced extra cost in the creation and exercise of municipal institutions, and has naturally afforded unexampled opportunity for municipal crime. Notwithstanding these conditions, the spirit of our free institutions has created in the American city a marvel of efficient local government, and has raised it, in practically one lifetime, to the height of commercial glory and to unapproachable civil magnificence. "Looked at in this light," says the same authority, "the moral would seem to be, not so much that the American cities are justly criticizable, but that results so great have been achieved in so short a time."

Considering this unique condition of municipal population and growth, the cities of this country, as a rule, under the influence of universal suffrage, are well governed. It is true, in many instances, we have the Boss, and the Ring Rule, and, as compared with the result, small deficiencies in effective government. But should we not consider the ultimate result of our system of general suffrage in the city? Broadway may not always be well swept, but our franchise system embracing all the people has made it the greatest street in the world. This great city, oftentimes, may have ineffective management of its politics and finances, but its great harbor is crowded with the ships of all the nations, and the world bows to its unapproachable civil grandeur. Again, it has been frequently made the illustration of bad civil government under the rule of the people endowed with the universal franchise, but has not this universal franchise created the greatest city on this continent? We hear of much vice in the city, but I challenge a comparison

of New York City with London or Paris. Do we sufficiently consider ultimate results when we are discussing the political management of civil government, both city and state? Beyond question, there has been municipal crime, but whenever it has been ascertained public sentiment has demanded, and in most instances effected, the punishment of the criminal. When we speak of municipal crime, does it compare, in anywise, with the scandals and the crime arising from the opening and improving of the new Paris? Is it to be mentioned with the municipal crimes of London twenty years ago after its thousand years of existence? Are not the results of popular control to be commended somewhat when you have the best system of public schools, of charity and correction, of fire protection, of parks and streets in the known world?

It is true, that the ideal of government of a portion of the population of the city is low, but would it not be fraught with infinite evil to keep it at that level by withholding the franchise from a large part of the population? Without argument, what effect upon the city would the vast foreign element of this city have if debarred from the great social and educational benefit derived from the exercise of the franchise? Which is worse in a free government, a badly swept street, or thousands of discontented people walking the clean one? Surely, in a popular government, what cause of discontent could be so potent as the debarring from the franchise? As a general rule, there has been crime and mismanagement in the American cities, yet under the exercise of the universal franchise the American city has steadily grown and is growing better. The elections are fairer, the schools infinitely better, the streets are cleaner, the finances more hon-

estly administered than they were ten years ago, and I appeal to your own experience to know if every general condition of municipal government is not improving under the practical application of the present system of suffrage. The cities of smaller size are practically well governed, and in almost every state in the Union the laws governing the cities and the application of them, are vastly improved. Every year witnesses the increase in the number of states, which provide in their constitutions against special charters being made for cities, and a number of states are conferring upon the cities the right to approve their charters before they go into operation.

Says President Seth Low, at whose feet as at those of a master do I sit when studying this interesting question of municipal government, "Everyone understands that universal suffrage has its drawbacks, and in cities these defects become especially evident. It would be uncandid to deny that many of the problems of American cities spring from this factor. Especially because the voting population is continually swollen by foreign emigrants whom time alone can educate into an intelligent harmony with the American system. But because there is a scum upon the surface of a boiling liquid it does not follow that the material nor the process to which it is subjected is itself bad. Universal suffrage as it exists in the United States is not only a great element of safety in the present day and generation, but is perhaps the mightiest educational force to which the masses of men have been exposed. . . . It is probable that no other system of government would have been able to cope any more successfully on the whole with the actual condition that American cities have been compelled to face."

Pursuing this "Hierarchy of Liberty," let us briefly consider the next higher relation of the citizen to government. Has a half century of universal suffrage preserved the institutional rights of the State? This is most important in determining whether a modification should be made in the existing system, for during this period the spirit of Democracy speaking through universal suffrage has exercised unlimited control of the institutions of our government, and could at will change or destroy. Those who formed this government knew not well the power they were creating. They had only before them the ancient Democracies, which universally, from the impulses of passion or of interest, destroyed existing conditions and disregarded organic rights. The Fathers wished to adopt a plan of government which, while it would be Democratic, yet no power of the majority could interfere and destroy certain rights and organic principles. Hence they created the judiciary, a selected few, and practically said that this department of democratic government, within constituted limitations, should be the casting and controlling voice as to the rights most sacred to the people. It was certainly a bold idea in the new system of democratic government to allow a few to settle the great questions affecting the many. Yet to-day, although the decisions of the courts have been often times contrary to the judgment of the people and sometimes even oppressive, yet the spirit of democracy dominated by the universal suffrage of the people has left unimpaired in power and in dignity the courts of the land. Nay more, appreciating that national and state life can only live through the stable and impartial spirit of justice, it has enlarged and widened the powers of the courts until to-day, in the estimation of the people,

and in fact, they embody the highest and most sublime attributes of this free nation.

The Fathers having in mind the immense powers of the executive head of the British Government gave the veto power sparingly and grudgingly to the executives of the states, yet the people under the influences of universal suffrage have doubly guaranteed the states against their own acts and during the lifetime of the present system of franchise have practically given the salutary power of veto, excepting possibly in two or three instances, to the governor of every state in the Union.

The fear has been on the part of those interested in our institutions that the majority, uncontrolled, would weaken and practically destroy the binding and organic powers of the state constitutions, and introduce a doctrine of loose interpretation of their important provisions. What has been the result? Constitutional provisions created in the early days of the states have been strengthened in detail and particular until every organic right of to-day is protected as never before in the history of civil government.

Instead of license and instability of organic government, universal suffrage has increased conservatism, and in one hundred years only the post-bellum amendments have been added to the Constitution, and unless it is absolutely and potently demanded an amendment to the state constitution universally meets defeat at the hands of the people.

Although the legislatures are the nearest representative agents of the people, still by constitutional enactment the legislatures of the states are hedged about by stringent provisions, holding them to strict accountability in every sense of their legislative life.

The great principles of Magna Charta, those primordial rights as to life, liberty and property, under our suffrage system, have been strengthened by the people; and year by year, in essence and by legislative enactment, they have become the increasing breath of the State. Universal suffrage has accentuated the sacred rights of free speech, the freedom of religion, the supremacy of the civil over the military authority, the rights of the press, and the sacredness of vested property in its various forms, calling forth from Sir Henry Maine, certainly no friend of popular government, the encomium, that "all this beneficent prosperity reposes on the sacredness of contract and the stability of private property; the first the implement, and the last the reward of success in the universal competition," and in a democracy generally emphasizing, "that this is a government of law, not of men."

Whilst the organic powers of the state have been strengthened by the people, yet state socialism under universal suffrage has not grown with the growth of the people. To live by taxation imposed by the state upon some other person and to exist by the exertion of others is the temptation of the body politic of a free government. A half century ago when the spirit of universal suffrage became the policy of our country, a great Englishman remarked, "In thirty years the American states will be cooking for the populace." Notwithstanding the unexampled and marvelous increase in the complexities of government and in the essentials of our civilization, to-day, whilst the people hold absolutely in their strong hands the purse strings of taxation and the whole power of the state, and whilst the conditions of life have become necessarily more severe with them, yet they have not increased the sphere of the state in lifting from their

oftentimes tired shoulders one burden of life. Tempted by the fair promises of party, preyed on by the demagogue, in sight of the bursting treasures of the state, yet the sphere of the state, as expressed by the organic institutions of to-day, comprises the care of the poor and the insane, the establishment of hospitals, the education of the people, the management of the state machinery, in both the spirit, and in almost the exact words, as penned by the hands of the Constitution makers of a century ago. Whenever an enlightened socialism has enlarged this sphere of the state it has always been a necessary concomitant of, and logical sequence to, these original organic powers of the state and never for the individual material benefit of the citizen. The Patriarcha is still a dream as it was in the days of Sir Robert Filmer, and universal suffrage has not purchased the ease of the people at the price of the paternalism of the state. It has grasped the principles of universal education as the broadest and best foundation for republican institutions ; and whilst the State succeeded the Church as the controlling influence in directing education, still under pressure, oftentimes great, the people have resolutely clung to the principles of absolute divorce from sectarian religious teaching on the part of the State. Excepting under peculiar conditions in one portion of our country, the principle of universal suffrage has been widened by the state until it enfolds all of the people. The seeming anomaly of its arrested development in one section is particularly germane to this branch of discussion, as to the relation of the people to the State, and with your permission I will briefly consider the peculiar conditions of suffrage in the South.

Will you not to-night, for a short time, listen to a Southern man, as he endeavors to lay upon your

broad shoulders a little of the burden which has weighed so heavily upon the shoulders of your sisters of the South, and to explain why the march of the universal franchise has been delayed in the South? No good Southern man fears to trust implicitly the chivalry of the North. Necessarily, I can occupy but a short time upon this interesting question, and will but generally consider it.

When the war ended, from Virginia to Georgia, the yellow Southern sun looked down upon ruin unparalleled in the history of civilization. The cities were destroyed, and the lands were devastated. We were without clothes, or money, or food. Our fathers and brothers were sleeping in

“The voiceless graves where dead men dream.”

Our industries were paralyzed, and our civilization was uprooted. There was alone left the bright sun, the fruitful soil, and a far-away hope. These would have been sufficient foundation upon which a resolute and energetic people could have again reared an abiding and glorious civilization. But, sir, in the years gone by, on the shores of Old Virginia, there landed a ship

“Built in the eclipse and rigged with curses dark,”

and when the man of the South lifted his despairing eyes they beheld his former slave, uneducated, untried in government, untouched with the genius of rule, unpermeated with Americanism, sitting on the broken porticos and bestriding the fallen pillars of his state. Since Alaric and Attila scourged Europe, never has wrong so wrought upon the civilization of the world as it did in the years of Negro rule in the South. I turn with sorrow from the dreadful record, and only

look back upon the wretchedness of the Past in order to explain the complexity of the Present.

The debts of the Southern States were increased four hundred millions of dollars. States were pauperized, and the millions squandered went into the hands of the Negroes and their allies, and not in the channels of good government. Debauchery ran riot, and political dishonesty held a saturnalia equaled in its unspeakable horrors only in the last days of Imperial Rome. Law was disregarded, the rights of Habeas Corpus and the great fundamental principles of Anglo-Saxon government were laughed to scorn ; juries were packed and courts debauched ; men were not allowed to appear in court to show cause why they should not be bereft of their remaining property. The supreme courts were travesties, and were packed or elected to do the bidding of those who wished to legalize by the terms of the law some legislative crime.

What was the natural result of this terrible condition of social and state life? Men seeing the state forever ruined, their property confiscated, their very lives in danger, business paralyzed, taxes increased an hundredfold, and property destroyed, did many things, dictated by the sole spirit of self-preservation, which were not understood by the North at the time.

Let us speak plainly and yet with charity. We are brothers and each wants to understand the troubles of the other. Here has been the chief trouble in this great question. The negro question has been made a political cry and the mere flotsam and jetsam of party. It is the most important question, political as well as economical, which has ever confronted civilization at any time or in any country. It demands all of our power, all of our love and patience and forbearance, and it should be worked out by the whole

people uninfluenced by the demagogue or the wish of party. We, of the South, ask that you simply put yourselves in the position of your Southern brethren. I mean, Sir, only in your kindly imagination, for with all of the strength of my life, I pray that you and the North may never walk the road of suffering and sorrow as has the South. Consider the fundamental difference in your political and social situation and that of the South.

Your sole cause of complaint as to popular government is that you have a large number of foreigners in your population. They are of the same blood, of the same color, largely of the same language, and filled with the same aspirations as yourselves, and are rapidly assimilating with you in character and in life.

With us there is an alien race, different in color, in life, and with whom as a primordial factor of his being the Teuton has strenuously refused to assimilate in blood, in social existence or in government.

Mr. Chairman, to emphasize this sad condition of the South, let me say that at the time the South was placed under the feet of the negro and his white allies, not more than one-tenth of them could read and write; and as late as 1880 only three-tenths were able to read and write.

It was Mr. Lincoln's intention to bring the States back into the Union with the white man in control. This is clearly shown by his proclamation in reference to North Carolina. His plan was to bring back this state with the voters who were qualified in 1860. These voters, of course, were the white men. Later he was in favor of allowing the intelligent negro to vote. He penetrated more profoundly than any other statesman of his era into the deep mystery of the civil life in the South, surrounded as it was by its pe-

cular political and social conditions. He thoroughly understood, imbued as he was with the very genius of free government, and believing in the exercise of the franchise by all of the people, that the conditions surrounding the South were peculiar and unique, and that the franchise provisions applicable to the country at large would not apply to the South. He wrote Governor Hahn of Louisiana : ‘Now you are about to have a convention, which, among other things, will probably define the elective franchise, I barely suggest for your private consideration, whether some of the colored people may not be let in ; as, for instance, the very intelligent, and especially those who have fought gallantly in our ranks. They would probably help in some trying time to come to keep the jewel of liberty in the family of freedom.’’

With that marvelous intuition into the innermost workings of the peoples’ being, Mr. Lincoln saw then, that which has cost us a third of a century of heart burnings and misunderstandings and loss to learn, that the govermental problem of the North and West to be solved by a people of the same race and color, homogeneous in educational and civil traditions, was totally different in every element from that to be worked out by the South, with its Caucasian civilization intermixed with, and oftentimes dominated in numbers by, a race different in color, genius and tradition, and just emerging from centuries of slavery. But Mr. Lincoln’s death blasted the hopes of the South, and in the war between Congress and Andrew Johnson, the South fell heir to the horrors of Reconstruction.

Then arose the Kuklux trouble, and there were passed many improvident laws by the South, and then

occurred on both sides those matters, which in the heated state of public feeling, were the cause of the North and South not abiding together in peace and in unity. Truly it was a situation for the South which had no hope in its dark bosom, and however decided would mean ultimate hurt to her and her institutions.

The men of the South saw the sad ruin in character and credit, the paralysis of public and private business, and that personal and political crime was open and unabashed. They did exactly that which the people of the North would have done under the same circumstances. They asserted themselves and saved the state from the ruin impending and drove the negro from control. Yet, on the other hand, they knew that they violated the letter of the Constitution and infringed upon the fundamental theory of our government. Every intelligent Southern man knew this and regretted the situation. Mr. Chairman, was there ever such a condition presented to a free people? To have bowed to the will of the majority, we would have beheld a land

“ Its shores

Strewn with the wreck of fleets, where mast and hull
Drop away piecemeal; battlemented walls
Frown idly, green with moss, and temples stand
Unroofed, forsaken by the worshipers.
Foundations of old cities and long streets
Where never fall of human foot is heard
Upon the desolate pavement.”

To do otherwise was to offend against the fundamental laws governing the life of a free government.

Now, Sir, the South intends to do away with this anomalous condition. The men of the South understand the lesson their enforced condition has com-

elled them to teach. They intend to work out this question under the spirit and the letter of the Constitution. The reason why this absolute fairness has been delayed was the memory of the negro rule and control in the South, and, further, that the South did not intend to place its future with all of its marvelous possibilities in the control of the forces which wrecked it during the Reconstruction period. Whilst holding the political situation in their own hands, they propose to treat the negro fairly under the Constitution of the country. Throughout the whole of the South, there has been, and is now, a movement for constitutional conventions in the direction of pure government. These conventions are not, as some understand, to get rid of the vote of the negro or of his control. The white man dominates politically in every Southern State. The conventions are in the direction of constitutional government and pure elections and fairness to the negro, and are intended as a legal and honest method by which the Southern States can relieve themselves of their trouble and perplexity and do justice to the election laws of the country, and at the same time preserve their civilization.

I have no intent or desire to avoid a fair statement of the situation ; but I am placing it before you in all honesty and simplicity in order that you will understand that the South is attempting, with the little light before us, to work out for this country the question which tangles our feet in whatever path we would turn.

Personally, I have earnestly urged that the South should adopt an inflexible educational or property basis, administered fairly for both white and black. I believe that this would work out the question, and the South

is gradually arriving at the conclusion that it can, by constitutional method, preserve the spirit of the Constitution and save its civilization. It desires and intends to give the negro his constitutional rights, and has only been heretofore debarred from so doing by the fear of the destruction of that which a state holds most sacred. The energy of the South is being earnestly devoted to educating the negro in order to, as quickly as possible, make him a good and intelligent citizen. Groping in the dark, we grant that often-times wrong has been done to the negro. This the South deplores, whilst not for a moment intending to assent to the truth of the thousands of the baseless charges which have been made against her in the treatment of this question. In our impoverishment, we have given one hundred million dollars to the education of the negro, and we are to-day impartially dividing with him our every dollar, in order that we may work out for this country and for mankind the darkest riddle which has ever confronted and perplexed civilization. Whilst the South is doing her part, the negro has responded nobly by a splendid progress in education and in those virtues which will ultimately make him useful instead of a menace to civilization.

The settlement of this momentous question cannot be accomplished in a day. Time must be one of the chief factors. In adjusting the political relations of the negro and the white man, living together, with no precedent to guide, there have necessarily resulted many mistakes. But the situation will be worked out with justice to the negro, with honor to the white man, and in consonance with the spirit of the Constitution. In the progress towards constitutional government in the South, although believing firmly in

universal suffrage, many of us, friends of the negro, have advocated a franchise limitation as an immediate step from the anomaly of to-day and towards the consummation of fair government for white and black.

This seemingly anomalous position has not been brought about by a spirit of unfairness towards the negro or by instability of our political opinion. It does not furnish any argument for the imposition of a franchise limitation throughout the country. The situation must be looked at under the plain light. The men who believe in a franchise limitation for the South are unquestioned as to their friendship for the negro; but they know and understand the conditions in the South. These conditions are unprecedented in political history, unexampled in civilization, and absolutely unique in their relations to the other portions of the country. In the country at large universal suffrage means civil splendor, commercial and personal welfare, pure government, peace and progress. In the South it means prostration of the State, anarchy, commercial and personal ruin, and a war of races, destructive to state and social government. Upon one principle, however, the relations of the South to the country at large are upon the same level; and that is, whatever franchise limitations may be imposed by the South to preserve her civilization, should be administered with unsparing impartiality alike for white and black, and the South intends that this shall be.

It is important to consider for a moment the effect which the era of universal suffrage has had upon the relation between the States and the National Government. The early sentiment was that universal suffrage would retard the growth of the nationality of

this government. In other words, having the ancient democracies in mind, not differentiating between them and our representative system of government, many feared that, under a wide franchise, popular license would trend in the direction of the increase in the powers of the states. At that period the great preponderating powers of the states led to the free entertaining of this view. In the majority of conflicts with the National Government, the States had won. They had taken advantage of every question and doubt as to the reservation of their powers under the Constitution, and had most vigorously availed themselves of these reserved rights. Thus, at this period, the States had grown relatively so powerful that it led DeTocqueville to declare that the Union was desired only as a shadow, and that ultimately its existence would be endangered by the preponderating power of the States in the social compact. The present condition of the balance in our social affairs shows the complete failure in the prognostications of that day as to the effect of universal suffrage upon the governmental relations under the social compact. In the years of universal suffrage in this country the balance of the government has been restored, and instead of popular license and national disintregation, and the increase in the already overweening powers of the States, the National Government has been relatively strengthened. The governmental condition of to-day shows the great skill of its creation, for whilst the war left the National Government with vastly increased powers, yet the causes of friction have been largely removed between the concurrent powers under the Constitution, and there is to-day a smoother running between the States and the National Government than has ever been known in the

history of our country. It gives a great impetus to optimism when we observe that, notwithstanding the great war, which was practically a war of the General Government against the sovereignty of the states, that the states are to-day as absolutely sovereign within their constitutional powers as ever before. The chief fear of to-day, however, is the tendency of greatly increased power in the general government, as the danger was fifty years ago in the enlarged powers on the part of the states.

The Supreme Court of the United States has upheld the constitutional rights of the states in their relation to the General Government, as well as vigorously maintaining their internal rights, and public sentiment appreciating the tremendous power which the General Government exhibited in the great civil conflict, and its consequent preponderance necessarily arising from that exhibition of strength, has been earnestly aroused in the past few years in the direction of preserving intact the Constitutional rights of the states. As a great scholar well observes, "This reliance (upon national authority), however, is controlled and regulated by the deep-seated consciousness of the people that the rights of the separate states are not to be superseded by the acts of the Central Government, and that the rights of town, counties and districts are to be protected against the arbitrary interference of legislation." In this relation is peculiarly needed that "righting sense" of the people, undiminished in power, to watch and preserve within their respective bounds those delicate relations between the State and General Government.

Let us for a moment investigate the relations of the citizen each to the other, and practically speaking, the effect of universal suffrage upon the classes.

This has been the subject of infinite discussion by the learned. Will you pardon me for an observation as to the general consideration of this important question by the scholars. They have largely affected the public sentiment among the higher classes. The want of breadth in the elucidation of this question of universal suffrage by the learned emboldens me, a plain man, to ask for a deeper and more real knowledge of the people on the part of the learned of our country. They have wrought infinite harm to the body politic by opinions betraying want of knowledge of the people themselves, the real subject of discussion. Do not the conclusions of the learned as to the great public too frequently result from investigation and experience alike limited and indiscriminate in application? Do not those in high places most frequently neglect the strenuous exercise of that *ars profunda*, that deeper penetration into the very life and genius of the people? That subtle spirit, that vital essence of the people's being is the most difficult to grasp, and it can only be comprehended by that knowledge of the life, the thoughts, the habits and the desires of the people, by an investigation alike profound as it is rare.

The destiny of a nation cannot be forecast and its civic phenomena adequately explained from experience touching the abuse of one privilege, the failure of one system, or the wrongdoing of one class. The study of the effect of a system in the city, with its peculiar relations to the body politic, will not suffice as the foundation of an opinion as to the country at large. The study is too narrow. Rather to control the thought, and direct our hope, there should be a study of these eternal principles which are deep in the very spirit and breath of the people and which alone guide the destiny of a nation. I

repeat that this experience can only arise from a wide study of the people itself. Appreciating those who love the books and respecting "that wit of wisdom," still the highest essential in investigating the people is that rare combination of mind and experience which can both touch elbows with the thought of the people and deduce therefrom a right conclusion. I have in my mind a book of a teacher of youth, who, should he have lived in the Athenian days, would surely have owed a cock to Asclepius, wherein, with the authority of high place, he teaches the youth that the majority of those who predominate in the exercise of universal suffrage are vicious and ignorant and love the gambling den, the brothel, the saloon and the prize ring to the exercise of pure politics. Sir, such deductions, their foundations untrue in fact and defective in investigation, lower the moral tone of the student and dishonor the citizens of the Republic. Against such teachings, in the name of the millions of clean-hearted and pure-breathed men, whose eyes never beheld the gilding of the saloon and whose souls never knew the infection of the brothel, and who, whilst the furniture may be scanty and the floors bare, hallow the rented house with the unspeakable glory of an honest, pure and independent citizenship, whose hands, though hardened with work, would spurn the touch of unearned gold, and whose hope and ambition is to leave to their children that same incorruptible citizenship bequeathed to them by the Fathers of the Republic, and in the name of the youth of our country, whose minds are corrupted by such teachings, I enter my earnest protest and dissent. To those who discuss without kindness or moderation the great problems of our national existence, I beg that from the poet of dark-

ened Persia they will read that lesson of moderation which they have failed to grasp under a century of free government.

“And Abraham sat in the door of his tent about the going down of the sun.

And behold, a man bowed with age came from the way of the wilderness, leaning on a staff.

And Abraham arose and met him, and said, Turn in, I pray thee, and Abraham baked unleavened bread and they did eat.

And when Abraham saw that the man blessed not God, he said unto him, Wherefore dost thou not worship the most high God, Creator of heaven and earth?

And the man answered and said, I do not worship the God thou speakest of, neither do I call upon his name.

And Abraham’s zeal was kindled against the man, and he arose and drove him forth with blows into the wilderness.

And, at midnight, God called upon Abraham, saying, Abraham, where is the stranger?

And Abraham answered and said, Lord, he would not worship thee, neither would he call upon thy name, therefore I have driven him out before my face into the wilderness.

And God said, Have I borne with him these hundred ninety and eight years, and clothed him, notwithstanding his rebellion against me, and couldst not thou, that art thyself a sinner, bear with him one night?

And Abraham said, Let not the anger of the Lord wax hot against his servant, for lo I have sinned, forgive me, I pray thee.

And Abraham arose and went forth into the

wilderness, and returned with the man to the tent, and when he had entreated him kindly, he sent him away on the morrow with gifts."

Those who look with doubt and uncertainty upon our future remind me that the spirit of democracy in our country is weakening the foundations of Home, and is dimming the light which touches, with the glory of holiness, the marital bed. I am not invading the realm of sociology. The purity of the people is the foundation of the civil life of the Republic. It is the very foundation of our political existence. To prove the tendencies towards the increasing laxity of our civil life under the Democracy of the day, I am confronted with statistics showing the increase of divorces. Sir, I understand not the jargon of statistics, nor do I trust their rigid conclusions when they conflict with the experiences of my daily life. To believe them is to believe that the veil of the temple has surely been rent in twain and the sacred homes of the people have been filled with "Gorgons, Hydras and Chimeras dire." I deny the foul aspersion. I have lived my life with the people of the mountains and the country. Here the vast bulk of the population live. Here, beside the streams, and on the majestic plains, and in the mountains, is the fate of the Republic. By the streams and in the mountains in all the days has God talked with the people, and here, away from the hurry of the city, is the place of the true contemplation of these vital questions of the Republic. No statistical measuring rod can reach the homes of the people. Sir, in my lifetime I have seen the whole order of life changed, and by the thunderous tramp of your legions in blue our Southern civilization was shaken to ruin. Amid its wreck and revolution, sundered from every tie except that of the little ones, with a

guard as of the fiery Cherubim warning her away from the gates of Home, alone the mother and wife of the South was touched by no change or revolution. Turning calmly without a sigh from the gentleness of home, she gave herself to the higher, sweeter and better life, and her nature has not lost its purity and gentleness, nor has her soul been touched or hurt with the hardness of life. Despite casuist and statistician, above the glory of man's effort and success, more potent than power or prestige, there is one spirit untouched, and that is the central figure of American life, the wife and the mother of the American home. To-night, under the stars when the day is done, if, with noiseless fingers, we could touch the veil of the temple in the homes of the people,

“ Those everlasting gardens,
Where angels walk and the seraphs are the wardens,”

we would behold the mother, pure and unspotted, gathering to her knees the little ones, white robed and clean, and we would hear, like incense, ascending to the open gates, from the prairie and the mountain, and from mansion house and farm and city, over the borders of this mighty Republic, from the myriads of homes, the sweetest prayer ever murmured by worshiping lips :

“ Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep ;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.”

Here still dwells the immortality of the Republic, with its plenitude of pure civil life, and surely here lives, in ancient vigor, the true spirit of our greatness. In the homes of our Republic is our hope of civil immortality, and that hope rises triumphant over all difficulties and complications. For around their

sacred portals lingers the golden sunshine, which is perennial, and whose splendor is not dimmed by the march of the day. No, sir, the spirit of Democracy has crowned the head of the American home with an increasing manliness known in no other country under the sun, and has touched the life of his helpmate with a spirit of virtue and gentleness which grows in its marvelous beauty as the years march along.

It is stated with all the power of authority that one of the tendencies of universal suffrage has been to increase the power of party and to render political strife more acute, and thus make party more dangerous to the Republic. Is this our experience? It seems to me that the result of the exercise of universal suffrage has been to cause more independence of party and more moderation than ever before. I appeal, Sir, to the facts. In the last election, whose mighty throbs we still feel, there was a greater "scratching" of ballots than ever before known in the history of this government. The Independent in politics has largely been the growth of the last quarter of a century. A careful investigation of the ballots, an examination of the ballot commissioners, and an analysis of the vote in ten separate states, disclose, as never before, the gradual disenthralment of the voter from party. I call your attention to another statement which, but to mention, carries with it this conclusion. There was never before in your experience or in mine a time when the independent voter was so important and so absolutely independent. Aye, more than this, there has never been a period since this country was divided by well-defined parties when a man could, with so much equanimity and with as little criticism, turn his back upon his party and upon all of his political traditions

as to-day. The protest against the corruption of the day is growing in character and power as never before. In the South, where politics is a passion and where party fealty is of the first importance, the independent in politics is the greatest political phenomenon of our time. Consider this question somewhat more broadly than in relation to the mere voter. Look for a moment at the attitude of the press to party. We have seen within six years dozens of great newspapers of the country break away from party affiliation. The country within the last ten years has been filled with political clubs and associations, growing in power and importance, with independence of party as the sole reason for their existence. With the rise of these powerful associations has marched the magazine and newspaper, entirely independent as to political control, and reserving the right to criticize or to oppose party.

What has been the tendency of the day under this system in reference to the acerbity and virulence of party politics? Under the existence of universal suffrage the trend of sentiment has been distinctly towards moderation. The scandals, the hatred, the vilification and the rancor of the old days of the Republic are to-day almost unheard of and would not be tolerated. Let us, for a moment, turn for proof to the past and listen to the turbulent sounds from the golden days of the Republic. Says Mr. Jefferson, "You and I have formerly seen warm debates and high political passions. But gentlemen of different politics would then speak to each other and separate the business of the Senate from that of society. It is not so now. Men who have been intimate all their lives cross the street to avoid meeting and turn their

heads another way lest they should be obliged to touch their hats."

De Tocqueville quotes the language of the first newspaper upon which his eyes fell when he arrived in this country, and the expressions therein contained concerning the President would not to-day be tolerated. Contrast this with the American experience of a great Englishman of to-day. Says Professor Bryce: "Partisans are reckless, but the mass of the people lends itself less to acrid partisanship than it did in the time of Jackson, or in those first days of the Republic, which were so long looked back to as a sort of heroic age. Public opinion grows more temperate, more mellow, and assuredly more tolerant. Its very strength disposes it to bear with opposition or remonstrance. It respects itself too much to wish to silence any voice."

An authority of this city teaches that under our system of universal suffrage the people are losing their love of the united country, and that the bonds binding us together are loosening. Sir, this cannot be the tendency of to-day. Will you allow an illustration to the contrary from my own experience?

Sir, I recall the days of the sorrow of the South, and I well remember, when I stood by the open grave of a Southern soldier. Our armies had been overwhelmed, Virginia was invaded and ruined, and our hope was gone. War, ruthless and unsparing, and Desolation, grim and terrible, galloped booted and ready over the once fair land, and Death, their ever present handmaiden, filled the hills with sorrow. The green grass was under the mire of the hoof beat, and the hope of food for the women and little ones was as blasted as the white poverty of the fields. Only the cedar and the pine wore their dresses of green as

if to touch the despair of the present with a tinge of the hope of the future. To the little group of women and children and aged men the habiliments of woe prescribed by custom were not, for war even denied to those who mourned that gentle clinging to those who had gone as expressed by the outward tokens of sorrow. Here, an old bit of black lace ; there, a worn piece of crepe, a black belt, a faded hat, mute evidences of the desire to make that show hallowed by our custom and love, only too plainly evidenced that grief and ruin had in this devoted land touched their strong hands. Lifting his eyes to the skies, which alone were bright, the aged man of God read the wail of the Jews in a foreign land :

“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down ; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.

“We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

“For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song ; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

“How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?”

When the ripening harvest was casting its glory of yellow grain over our renewed land, verily a fair land bursting with plenty and happiness, within a year, standing by that soldier’s grave, once the wailing place of a conquered people, I listened to a great son of the North, our honored guest, once a soldier in blue, once our enemy, speaking in burning words to the listening soldiers of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, telling them of the glory of this Union, hallowed by our sufferings and sorrow, and doubly blest with the love and peace and happiness of the people. Yea, sir,

"Hands are clasped in joy unspeakable,
Old sorrows are forgotten now,
Or but remembered to make sweet the hour
That overpays them; wounded hearts that bled
Or broke are healed forever."

When I have witnessed this most exceeding love, then forsooth there must be needed something more potent than statistics marshaled under a midnight lamp to convince me that new influences arising from the political system of to-day can impair the peaceful though secret bonds of love binding together the soul and life of this great and free people.

A fierce indictment against universal suffrage is that it accentuates and intensifies the tyranny of the majority. The Fathers did not so fear this tyranny, and they had before them the disturbing ideas of the French Democracy. Mr. Jefferson, in his enumeration of the essential principles to be observed by the people, places among the first as most sacred that "absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority the vital principle of Republics from which there is no appeal but to force, the vital principle and immediate parent of despotism." But, sir, do we have in the Republic the tyranny of the majority? Filled with the fundamental ideas of the Fathers, and permeated with the genius of free government, this has been a government where the decrees of the majority become the potent will of the whole people. Here is the essential difference between our institutions of free government and the fierce dictatorships of Southern and Central America masquerading under the fair guise of free government. Here the principles of the majority are assimilated and carried to fruition by the whole people. Whilst this is the theory and practice of our government, yet the people

have wisely conceived the idea that, whilst they acquiesce in the controlling will of the majority, yet that the theory of the majority should be worked out by the practical assistance of the minority. Hence, with universal suffrage was born the theory of minority representation, and it has grown as part of its life and being. This is the creation of the last half century, and again it is the people protecting against themselves. The desire to preserve the rights of the minority has grown with the people in representative and district elections, and its principle is practically adopted to-day in the State and National Government in the exercise of minority representation on every important Governmental Board and State Institution. Its handmaiden, Civil Service Reform, although suffering the delays incident to all reforms, has taken away one of the most potent criticisms against the rule of the people, and is day by day making fitness and qualification the essentials of place in the government. The rapid extension of this salutary principle, under the rule of, and accentuated by, the free suffrage of the people, is gradually but surely removing any danger to the Republic from the tyranny of the majority.

I would be false to the spirit which brought me here were I to say there are no dangers and no fears in the tendencies of the Democracy. Sir, there are dangers. There are tendencies which excite the apprehension, if not the fear, of those who love the Republic and hallow its faiths and ancestral truths. When there are no fears and no apprehensions in this free government, the world will again witness a people which only wants bread and the games, and whose genius is emasculated and whose vitality is stagnant. The people have met the vital questions arising

from the relations of the State to the General Government, and the equally important question of the citizen's relation to the State, and have solved these epochs wisely for free government.

There is to-day arising an era or epoch in our national life of far more reaching importance than either of the others. These epochs must arise in popular government. In aristocracies and monarchies the strong, central, guiding hand holds the government in the channel and on the quiet sea ; and whilst the ship of state does not rock, yet it makes less progress than when driven by the vigorous strength of a whole people.

An era arises insiduously, and in its womb, hidden from the people, are the seeds of disaster and death to popular liberty. This tendency must be grasped by a people and its progress stopped, or the tendency will become inherent and the epoch will burst its bounds and the Rubicon will have been passed dividing the people from its liberties. The tendencies of an epoch touching the state, guarded by written constitutional limitations, such as the relation of the citizen to the State, or the relation of the States to the General Government, are not to be greatly feared. The infraction of this class of rights cannot be insidious. The written law is engraved alike on the brazen posts as well as on the hearts of the people, and the approach of danger can be seen by all men. The epoch or tendency to be dreaded, as containing the very seeds of death to the institutions of a free people, is the era carrying with it the hidden dangers involving the division of the people into classes, the changing of the relations of the people to themselves, the change of sentiment as to the ideas of government, and the corruption of the moral tissues and life of the people resulting therefrom.

Here, sir, is the era of danger to a free people, for it is insidious in its approach and rights impinged upon are not written.

Read the history of free government in all ages and in all lands, and from all come the melancholy message that free government has always been destroyed from within and never from without. It is one broad, marked, unvarying path—a young people filled with freedom, simple, economical, patriotic, the widening of its power, ships on the seas, luxury at home and influence abroad, privileges for some, discontent for others, the rich and the poor, a Cleon haranguing the people and a Cæsar at the Capital. A tyro can write the simple story. It seems to me that this epoch of our civil life, when the people have largely passed the constructive and creative stages of the nation's existence, when the great fundamental questions of government have been settled, and the people are practically engaged upon these matters which shape for all time the texture and mold of the individual and class relation and existence, is the most important to us and to mankind.

The epoch of to-day into which the people are passing is the era of Commercialism. Its relation is most important to the question under discussion. Sir, with homage for its power, do I mention the spirit of American Commercialism impelled by the restless genius of this people. The Hanging Gardens would be but a plaything of a day for one of our merchant princes, and all the wealth of Rome garnered from Asia Minor and Gaul and Egypt and all of the tribute lands would not suffice to supply for one year the needs of the kings of American commerce. Never was there such power. It has surrounded this continent as a maiden by her girdle. It has pervaded

every class. It has turned its eyes to the world, and has grasped in its strong hands the whole universe. It has flung France aside from its path as a puny child. It has stridden past Germany, has throttled England, and stands to-day beside the only power, its comparative equal in future commercial rule, Imperial Russia. It is building bridges in Africa to bear the tramp of the British legions. Its rail to-night lies under the snows of Siberia, and behind its engines are heard the strange mutterings of the bearded Cossack and fierce Ukrainian. It is clothing the Celestial in cotton, and it is cutting the bearded wheat in Argentina. Strange tongues are whispering over its cables strung under strange seas. It is selling knives in Sheffield and cloth in France, and is lending money to London. It builds warships for the Czar and sewing machines for Japan. It digs coal under the winds of Magellan, and gold and diamonds in Africa. Its ships gather commerce from every port, and it buys and sells in every land. It waits not on steam and sail, but shakes the continent in its impatient hands that the waters of the Orient and Occident may flow together to do its bidding. It is omnipresent and almost omnipotent. Was there ever such power? It tosses millions as the boy flips the marble at his play, and its colossal combinations of wealth touch with their golden fingers every useful thing. This unprecedented growth of commercial life, necessarily expressing itself through corporate existence, the growth of interstate commerce, the building and operation of the railroad, the telegraph and the telephone, and the various wonderful and far-reaching combinations, demanding immediate results to be effective, necessarily restive at all interference, all being the expression of the commercialism of the day, affecting every condition of in-

dividual, social, national and commercial life, demands, as never before, the preservation of that essence of our national life and being, the spirit of American democracy, in all of its mighty strength and unshorn of any of its power.

Now, sir, do not understand me in the slightest degree to underestimate the power for good possessed by wealth. I make my obeisance to the great desire on the part of wealth to send light where there is darkness, to touch the sick and the helpless with soothing care, and to erect on the broadest foundation its monument to learning and the arts. This is a commercial nation, and the desire and power to acquire and use wealth within its legitimate bounds is to be honored by every good citizen. What, then, are the dangers of commercialism? What are its tendencies? Can these tendencies, if dangerous to the Republic, be eliminated by the reimposition of a restrictive franchise? The danger to the Republic from this era is that the legitimate spirit of commercialism will become political commercialism. It is rapidly so becoming. I submit, Sir, that this epoch of political commercialism, if unchecked in its tendencies, will destroy the true ideal of the Republic. In our natural haste to grasp and utilize the marvelous material conditions vouchsafed to us by a new continent, we are losing sight of the Republican principles inculcating those high and noble virtues which attended the birth of the Republic and which should live as its very texture. The love of the welfare of the whole people, the wealth of patriotism, that pride of high character of those in high places, that jealous desire for an exalted ideal for the nation, that thorough knowledge of the aims of the government looking not alone to self-utilization, seem to me to be lessening

under the fierce assault of those conditions which allow the citizen to such a vast extent to better his material welfare. It will surely beget a lower standard of civil life and desire. It is weakening the true spirit of democracy. Under the spirit as well as the letter of our institutions we can have no patent of nobility, but have we not established a class with success in accumulation as its real patent of nobility? Are we not making the standard of our ideal of citizenship, that of breadth of acres and numbers of stocks and wealth of possessions, rather than that of statesmanship, profound learning, exalted patriotism and unselfish citizenship? Would not the people to-day prefer Themistocles rather than listen to Aristides; and with the dominance of this spirit, so variant from the true idea of democracy, would not Jove soon fill the other urn with disastrous fullness. The real spirit of democracy, has been tumbling empires, and overthrowing kingdoms, and lifting the peoples of the world to a better and higher condition of life. Would not a change in its very life and texture bereave it of its real glory and power? Oh, my country,

“ If thou do’st consent
To this most cruel act, do but despair;
And if thou want’st a cord, the smallest thread
That spider ever twisted from her womb,
Will serve to strangle thee.”

The true ideal of democracy as exemplified by this government is to bear to the world the sublime message of help, and implant in the heart of the nations the spirit of hope of freedom and of improvement in every condition, social and governmental. Are we not changing the true spirit of this high ideal and giving to the world the message of almost infinite material power, of ability to trade and hold with the

strong hand and nothing more? I was looking once at a statute of Hercules, chiseled by a forgotten hand. It is different from all others I have ever seen and represented the ideal of my country. High intelligence beamed from its lofty brow and cultured features; withal it was strong and powerful, yet its strength was graced by beauty and activity. Nearby was the old ideal which we know so well, thews of brass, a jaw of iron and the lowering brow, the idealization alone of unmixed power. Are we not nearing this ideal of national life? Do not, I pray you, Mr. Chairman, think me wanting in the feeling of hospitality or in that spirit of high appreciation of your courtesy, or that I am filled with an impossible spirit of knight errantry, when I stand here in the heart of this imperial market-place and discuss commercialism. But, sir, I am profoundly impressed with the dangers of this tendency, and I would be recreant to my duty to my country and disingenuous to those who are here seeking for the truth, were I to dissemble or palter with this most vital question of our national life.

This spirit has been the tendency of all the ages, and the broad highway of the world is strewn with the whitened bones of the nations which traversed the fundamental ideas controlling their creation and life. With this tendency so potent and so plain, and arising almost universally from the higher and powerful classes, should we take the tremendous risk of in anywise interfering with the power in the hands of the masses of the people? Should we at this time lay our hands on the real corrective of this tendency which lies within the plainer and poorer people?

Sir, this spirit of commercialism, acting through vast aggregations, must have power, inordinate power. The attainment of some great selfish purpose, the

settlement of some commercial principle, the procuring of a franchise belonging to the people, the levying of taxes in one or another form, the obtaining of some special class privilege, the lifting of a burden from one shoulder to be placed upon another, are but a few illustrations of the growing power which has not in view the liberty or the good of the people, but only looks to selfish ends. Then, sir, from this spirit arises that appalling corruption which has spread its powerful influence over this country and which is to-day the chief danger to democratic institutions.

The Fathers of this Government, with the prescience which characterized their formulation of its principles, understood that the danger to a free government lay in the corruption of the body politic. It is but a truism to again reiterate this fear on the part of the Fathers. They discounted every great tendency of the Democracy, and in the formulation of their govermental principles arranged to counteract these tendencies. There have been no unforeseen tendencies of the Democracy. Yet, sir, they never for a moment understood the vast influences of commercialism which have been sown like the fabled dragons' teeth over the fields of the people. Let us here to-day be plain with each other. The trouble with the higher classes of the American people has been that they have not been ingenuous in dealing with this great question. It is remarkable, but it is true, that anything that concerns the commercial life of the people is touched tenderly by the intelligent classes. It seems to me that the tendency of the Democracy demands plain speaking on the part of those who are interested in the immortality of our free institutions. The Republic is in danger. From what source does the corruption spring, Mr. Chairman? Consider the ma-

chinery of a national campaign of to-day and you will have the answer. What is its chief burden? To formulate great principles touching the domestic, the national and international policies of the Government? No, sir; it is to raise vast sums of money. For what purpose? It would be cowardice for me to state that these enormous sums are for any purpose other than for the ultimate corruption of the people. Even with the teeming millions of our country these sums could not be legitimately spent. Who contributes them? The plain people, forsooth? Not a dollar! It comes by the thousands and the hundreds of thousands from those who expect to control the governmental policies of the country. Through this power, and we are not now considering the tremendous potentialities of the great vested influences in active operation upon the body politic, do we see the spirit of political commercialism having its dire effect upon the people. It bestrides both the parties like a Colossus and demands from your Congress and your Legislatures the price of its contribution. We are told that this interest in politics is solely for protection. In some instances such is the case. But in the more frequent instances the commercial interest is fiercely aggressive and demands from Congress and Legislature some higher tariff or lower tax or special privilege. It is true, Sir, that the great vested interests of this country are often threatened by the demagogue, but only infrequently does he have any practical effect upon legislation or upon the control of affairs. We are frightened with the cry of agrarianism and the enactment of laws against fair treatment of vested interests; but, Sir, I can count on the fingers of one hand the states where the people have passed laws unjustly discriminating against the great commercial inter-

ests of this country. Says a great authority: "In no country in the world is property as secure as it is with us. The guarantees of a constitution now, Mr. Bancroft tells us, the oldest in Christendom, have intrenched it against public as well as private attack. The British Parliament during the last half of the century has destroyed vested rights, broken up titles, seized private property for private use, in a way that to an American seems almost revolutionary."

Mr. Bryce observes that bribery does not directly touch the people. To differ with Mr. Bryce is to invite most serious controversy. The condition of to-day, however, shows the fell progress of corruption. I have seen the shambles of corruption, filled with money from high places, opened wide and with scarcely a pretense of concealment until the outraged decency of the plain people rebelled. I speak earnestly, because it is the vital question of our national life, whether or not the ballot box, the sacred custodian of the liberties of the people, reflects the unbiased and unpurchased opinion of the people. From this spirit of corruption arises the Machine and the Boss, for without money and its attending sinister influences they cannot live in the pure air of our free institutions. What I am attempting to inculcate is that political immorality comes not from the plain people, but most largely from the influences dominated by the higher class, which class cannot be reached by the reimposition of a franchise limitation.

How change these tendencies? How guide the mighty river so that its flood may fructify the earth and all of its peoples? The tendencies towards evil are not yet flowing with the blood and do not yet inhere into the bone of the people. This change cannot be accomplished by Courts of Impeachment, and Re-

moval, the Referendum, the Electoral Delegates and the thousand nostrums which are the mere modifications of the machinery of government, unaccompanied by the pure controlling spirit of popular life. These slight erections would soon be engulfed in the waves of a shoreless democracy. It would be binding the tide with ropes. The remedy must be deeper. Would these tendencies be changed by the reimposition of a suffrage limitation? You could not impose a money or a property qualification. An educational or an intelligence qualification would only be considered by the people.

Would the imposition of an intelligence franchise affect the general status? A few brief illustrations will show beyond cavil that an intelligence franchise, outside of the Southern States, where, by reason of the large illiterate negro vote, the conditions are abnormal, will not affect the general tendency. Let us illustrate by the states in this Union which have more than others felt the effect of political corruption. Take the states of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Illinois. These have been pivotal states and they have been swamped with money, and it is interesting to consider the effect of the illiterate vote. The total population of New York State at the census of 1890 was 4,822,392. The number of illiterates was 266,911, or 5.5 per cent of the whole population. Estimating one vote to every four of population, there were, in round numbers 1,205,000 voters, and 66,000 illiterate voters. Considering one-third of these illiterate voters to be venal, which is a large proportion, there would be in New York State 22,000 corruptible voters, through illiteracy, or one and five-sixths per cent of the whole voting population which would be reached by the imposition of the franchise regulation and thus debarred

from political life. This leaves the question of the effect of 22,000 venal voters upon practically a million and a quarter of intelligent voters. Would it account for the great corruption which is alleged to exist in New York State? This proportion does not even hold good at this period, for the illiterate vote is rapidly decreasing throughout the country. In the period between 1870 and 1890 the illiteracy in New York State decreased from 7.1 per cent to 5.5 per cent. In that proportion of decrease the danger of the vote arising from illiteracy in New York State would be decreased to about one per cent of the whole voting population, or, in round numbers, to about 15,000 votes of her voting population of about one and one-half millions.

In this regard let us consider New York City. There were 38,420 of illiterate males over ten years of age in 1890. Of these we will say that there were 35,000 voters. Allowing one-third of these to be considered as venal through illiteracy, we will have about 11,500 dangerous voters through illiteracy in the whole population of 1,210,000, or less than one per cent of the whole population of the city.

The population of Pennsylvania in 1890 was 4,063,134. Its illiterate population was 275,353, or 6.8 per cent of the whole population. Its voting population was 1,015,000, and the illiterate voting population was, in round numbers, 68,000. Allowing one-third to be corruptible, can we account for the debauchery of Pennsylvania politics by the presence of 23,946 who are corruptible through illiteracy out of a voting population of over 1,000,000? So with Illinois, with its voting population of 726,918, and its illiterate voting population of 38,158. Considering 12,719 of these to be venal, would that affect the vir-

tue of the remaining three-quarters of a million of honest voters? Ohio teaches the same lesson in almost identical figures. Iowa, with only 3.6 per cent. illiterates in the whole population, should certainly not feel the effect of its illiterate vote of a little more than four thousand upon its whole voting population.

There are other states where the rate of illiteracy is much higher, but what is remarkable is the fact that, with possibly two exceptions, in those states the corruptible element is smaller than in the states where the illiteracy is proportionately much less.

The lesson of these figures is potent, and shows, beyond any question, that the imposition of the intelligence franchise would only reach a very small portion of the vote considered venal, and that the illiterate vote, even if we consider the whole of it venal, would have comparatively small effect, moral or otherwise, upon the total voting population. This vote, comparatively infinitesimal in numbers and unimportant by reason of its ignorance, further loses its power for evil, for it has no cohesiveness, and its strength is dissipated between the parties.

More than this, my experience for years has been that the man peculiarly susceptible to corruption is not the one who cannot read and write. The potent elements of corruption are, primarily, the classes which provide the means for corruption, and, secondly, the agents whom they employ to use them. These can always read and write. The mere mechanical power to read and write, add and subtract, will surely not affect a man's political honesty, nor will it make a revolution in the sentiment of the people. Some more potent corrective to corruption is surely needed. You must educate the souls and the lives of the

people with a higher and better education than that imparted by the knowledge of a few elementary books. This education must reach their love of country and envelop the people with a nobler and grander and purer ideal of citizenship. What is needed is an education of their citizenship, not a mere education of the mind. This is the only education which can reach the crisis of to-day. More than this, will not the rapidly decreasing illiteracy resulting from our system of education soon destroy the necessity for an intelligence qualification for the franchise?

Above these considerations there is a higher and more potent objection to the reimposition of the franchise limitation. This objection touches the very heart of the nation's being. It will be turning our lives against the advance of modern political science. The sovereignty of the whole people is the dominant, aggressive and vital principle of to-day throughout the world. It has made a democracy of England and a Republic of France. Its spirit jostles the soldiers in Berlin, and it controls monarchical Europe. It shakes the Czar sitting on the only despotic throne in civilization. This spirit was born with our Republic, and should we be the power to arrest its development throughout the nations of the world? Would it not fix the attention of civilization upon class as the model we give it upon which to rebuild the institutions of government? Shall we bind the hands of this potent spirit and say to the people of the world, struggling against king and emperor and class and privilege, that the fundamental theory of our government is at fault, and that the people cannot be entirely trusted? Could we, in justice to our theory of government, send this message to the world after a hundred years of our civilizing free government? Shall we place Chinese

shoes on American feet and put the American citizen in a Procrustean bed? Would it not be an unhappy lesson for free government? Should we not rather take lessons from our old mother England? With a limited franchise, her elections were corrupt, and her administrative abuses were enormous. With a gradual change in her franchise to an almost universal suffrage, we behold corruption practically abolished and governmental abuses almost unknown. Verily, the remedy must be deeper. Sir, there must be reform, and it must come from the higher classes. It must be a true reform of the people, and not in the mere machinery of suffrage. The protest against the tendencies of the day must begin with you and me, and its action must be continuous and not ephemeral. It must not be a crusade, but should be a part of our lives. It should not express itself by a sermon once a year, illustrated by a trip to the slums under the protection of a policeman; but the inculcation of high political morals should be part and parcel of the everyday work and teachings of the church. We must demand that those in control of the affairs of commercial influences shall keep their hands away from the people, and by precept and example sternly enforce that demand. The pruning of the political tree must begin at the top and not at the root. The danger to the Republic is not to-day to be feared from the lower classes. The intelligent and critical classes who are not interested in some governmental policy for personal purposes have left the practical control of political affairs to the other classes of the body politic. This is essentially a political nation, and if the intelligent and disinterested citizen does not interest himself in governmental affairs either those interested for selfish purposes or the ignorant will take control. This government, while a

free government, will not run itself. It is founded upon the joint exertion of all of its citizens and not alone on the efforts of the corner grocery man and the place hunter. The people are guided by intelligence ; and the disinterested and intelligent classes in this country, if they will but interest themselves in political affairs will be the great potential factors in our political life. I repeat that the corrective influence must begin work in its own class and enforce its demand for pure government. It will surely succeed, for the plain people will earnestly respond to the demand of the disinterested and intelligent citizen. This government is founded largely upon the plain people. I believe in the plain people and they love this government and revere its abiding principles. They believe in the permanency of our free institutions. They love the Constitution, and whilst in moments of haste and passion they may wander, yet surely will they return to the vital principles of popular government. An honest appeal to the patriotism of the people has never yet by them been disregarded. The reform of mere political machinery will not suffice for this critical epoch in our governmental affairs. The people must again be summoned to their tents, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, abiding together as of old, and the Palladium of our faith, which has ever guided us in all our wanderings, must be again brought to our view. Hear again the law and listen to the real hope for the correction of the wrong tendencies of the Democracy :

“Equal and exact justice to all men of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political ; peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none ; the support of the state

governments in all their rights, as the most competent administrations of our domestic concerns and the surest bulwarks against anti-republican tendencies ; the preservation of the General Government in its whole constitutional vigor, as a sheet-anchor of our peace at home and safety abroad ; a jealous care of the right of election by the people ; a mild and safe correction of abuses, which are lopped by the sword of revolution, when peaceable remedies are unprovided ; absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority, the vital principle of Republics, from which there is no appeal but to force, the vital principle and immediate parent of despotism ; a well-disciplined militia, our best reliance in peace, and for the first moments in war, till regulars can relieve them ; the supremacy of the civil over the military authority ; economy in the public expense, that labor may be lightly burdened ; the honest payment of our debts, and sacred preservation of the public faith ; encouragement of agriculture, and of commerce as its handmaid ; the diffusion of information, and arraignment of all abuses at the bar of the public reason ; freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of person under the protection of the Habeas Corpus ; and trial by juries impartially selected.”

Sir, with the earnestness of one who loves the Republic, I believe that if we will grasp the people more closely to us in the bonds of a common patriotism, show them an example of high political morality among the intelligent and powerful, place before them the ancestral faiths as the texture of our national being, touch arms and hearts with them as part and parcel of the common body politic, public sentiment will become more lofty, patriotism will be revived and made more holy, and without touching limb

or twig of its mighty power, democracy will be disenthralled from the tendencies which disturb the day. These alone, Sir, are the mighty agents which will dethrone the Boss, break the Machine, correct abuses and touch again with life the alters of the country where deep down in the hearts of the people the fires of patriotism are burning clear and true. Will this save the Republic? That it will, I again summon as witness the mighty spirit of him from whose heart and hand were born the words and spirit of our Constitution. "These principles," says the Father of the Constitution, "form the bright constellation that has gone before and guided our steps through an age of revolution and reformation. They should be the creed of our political faith, the text of civic instruction, the touch-stone by which to try the services of those we trust. And should we wander from them in moments of error and alarm, let us hasten to retrace our steps and to regain the road which alone leads to peace, liberty and safety."

The witnesses are about us to-night that these words are as true to-day as they were in the spring-time of the Republic. The splendor of this presence of the learned, the great and the powerful, within the gates of this imperial city, listening to the words of a plain mountain man as he tells of the simple faiths of the Republic, fills me with hopes unspeakable for the perpetuity of our free government. Aye, sir, I can bear the message to the plain people of the country that here, amidst the silks and spices, the glitter and power of incomprehensible wealth, the hurry of trade, surrounded by all of the novel concomitants of our civilization, still abide the simple faiths of our ancestors.

In my home, on the banks of a sweet Southern

river, under the shadow of the mountains keeping their eternal watch and ward over the men who ceaselessly come and go, in the simple room where I read my books, stands a marble pedestal surmounted by a broken slab of stone. Traced in its brazen binding are the momentous words, "On this stone, at Montgomery, Alabama, February the eighteenth, 1861, Jefferson Davis was inaugurated President of the Confederate States of America." By some chance of the books, I found on the broken, worn piece of stone the life of Abraham Lincoln, and from its white leaves there breathed, as the glory of the fruition of a good man's prayer, louder and clearer than the relic freighted with the precious argosy of our tears, these words of encouragement to those who hope and believe in the immortality of our free institutions: "That government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from this earth?"

And may the Almighty who has glorified the Republic and blessed its people in all of the days keep ever present to you of the city your faith in these almost inspired words, for it is of more permanent value to mankind than all the jewels, the gold and the silver and the houses within your encircling waters.

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